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Note to Editors: Registration and accreditation forms for General Convention will be mailed soon.

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CAUCUS ASSEMBLY

DPS 82039

PLEDGES ADVOCACY ROLE

NEW YORK (DPS, Feb. 18) -- The rapid decline of the cities and the urgent need to plan for General Convention and beyond brought nearly 400 members of the Episcopal Urban Caucus to a four-day National Assembly here in mid-February.

At the end of the deliberations, the Caucus had pledged itself to creating a legislative advocacy team in Washington, developing training in advocacy for local groups and pressing for a national, ecumenical leadership conference on urban issues within six months.

Participants also agreed that the Caucus should raise \$150,000 for use for these programs in 1983 and laid plans for participation in the Sept. 5-15 General Convention in New Orleans.

Three elements -- a set of papers from the Caucus Policy and Evaluation group, the keynote address by the Rev. Canon Lloyd Casson, Caucus president, and a "Speak-Out" by people who have been affected by changes in government policy -- set the tone and laid the ground for those final decisions.

The papers included a brief history of post World War II urban policy and deterioration and a more detailed examination of the impact of current and proposed federal cuts and policy shifts on the poor in cities, and a document called "Where We Stand" that laid out brief policy/theological premises for exploration. These included:

"The earth is created by a gracious God to sustain life, and we are committed to plan its use to meet human needs."

"Work is a grace of creation as well as a burden, and we seek an economic order which honors the place of work for all."

"Racism violates the divine creation of all the image of God, and we will work to eradicate it in our churches and communities."

And, "Militarism violates our democratic tradition and Christian conscience. We commit ourselves to oppose military escalation and the nuclear arms race through education, public protest and work in our churches."

In his opening remarks, Casson urged participants to concentrate on these policy issues. Noting that the perception of rapid change is forcing many "good people to want to hold on to the world which gave them birth," he expressed fear that this attitude could force many to "lose their souls." "Enabling people to hold onto their souls," was a major role that the Caucus could perform.

Speak-Out participants included a white, wheelchair-bound woman, a black welfare activist and a laid-off auto worker whose testimonies brought the reality of modern economics into personal focus.

The paraplegic woman had been fairly independent and active through in-home support services that she lost because the rules changed. "Now," she told the Assembly, "I am one of the truly needy and there is no safety net. Some of us, in fact, think we've been dumped down the well."

The welfare activist also disparaged the "safety net" notion, pointing out that rules changes -- including reclassifying of some support as income -- had so affected the Richmond, Va. area that they had forced an additional 500 families into deeper levels of dependence.

The auto worker told the group that "no solutions were being provided" to the plight of jobless wage-earners forced into the streets. But he noted that companies were not cutting production all that much and the result was that men in their late, middle years now found themselves "back on the line, doing backbreaking, boring labor that their age and seniority should exempt them from."

After hearing these addresses, the conferees spent the middle portion of the Feb. 10-13 Assembly in small groups, regional meetings, and workshops before recovering to affirm the guidelines laid out in the papers and talks.

Commenting after the gathering, Casson said of the response and commitment: "I feel pretty good about this meeting. It's a sign that the Caucus really does hold out for some people the possibility of enabling them to carry out this ministry."

Pointing to the advocacy programs, Casson noted that this had always been a primary focus of the Caucus which saw itself as "a way in which Church people can be advocates with the poor and oppressed." The calls for a "new federalism," he said, meant that "The Church is going to have to learn, all over again, how to be advocates on the state level."

Learning that role and sharing it with parish, diocesan and regional groups will be a major thrust of the legislative advocacy team that the Caucus will assemble "as soon as funds and persons are available," according to the Assembly mandate.

Looking to Convention, Casson expressed the hope that "We are going to have a very exciting time in New Orleans. For the first time in years, we will be gathering with large groups of deputies and bishops educated in terms of the issues facing people. The policy changes, the peace and nuclear issues, have so cut across lines that people have been forced to think about them and I am very hopeful that we can make some very clear statements in New Orleans."

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DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/876-8400

PICTURE CAPTION

DPS 82040

Good Friday Offering Poster

#82040 The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East is the traditional recipient of a pan-Anglican Good Friday Offering. This sister Anglican Church, formerly under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, became an autonomous Province in 1976. It consists of the Dioceses of Jerusalem, Egypt, Cyprus and the Gulf, and Iran. The offering supports schools, hospitals, and agencies for the deaf, blind and orphaned. Materials for parish use, including poster (above), bulletin covers and offering envelopes, are available from the Seabury Service Center, Somers, CT 06071.

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PICTURE CAPTION

DPS 82041

Presiding Bishop's Fund Film Poster

#82041 "Hope for New Life" is the title of a new film about the refugee ministry of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. Narrated by the Rt. Rev. John M. Allin, the film visits a refugee camp in Africa; the Immigration and Naturalization Service detention center for Haitians in Dade County, Florida; and examines refugee resettlement ministry in the Dioceses of Northern Indiana, Louisiana, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Olympia. The 28-minute, 16mm film was produced for the Episcopal Church by Alva I. Cox. Prints are available without charge for parish use from local diocesan offices, or at a \$10 service charge from ROA Films, 1696 N. Astor St., Milwaukee, WI 53202. Call ROA toll-free at 800/558-9015. (Wisconsin editors NOTE: Do not publish the 800 number. Wisconsin residents may call ROA collect at 414/271-0861).

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DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

PICTURE CAPTION

DPS 82042

100 Years of Service at Church Center (DPS, Feb. 18)

#82042 An even century of service to the Episcopal Church was honored early this month when Presiding Bishop John M. Allin, right, invited Mario Pantojas, Terrence Adair and Matthew Costigan (L - R) to his office for a chat and a "small symbol of the Church's appreciation." The three have accumulated a total of 100 years of service and the Presiding Bishop, a relative newcomer to the Church Center, enjoyed hearing the men talk of their years, first at the old Church Missions House on Park Avenue and, since the early 1960s, here on Second Avenue. Pantojas, the "baby" of the group, is a staff accountant with 29 years. Adair is building services manager and has worked for the Episcopal Church for 30 years. Costigan, treasurer of the Council and the veteran with 41 years, doesn't like to say how old he was when he started but we understand child labor laws were much more lenient. (DPS photo).

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PICTURE CAPTION

DPS 82043

Pittsburgh Churches Cope with Subway Construction (DPS, Feb. 18)

#82043 This sign, in front of Trinity Cathedral (Episcopal) in downtown Pittsburgh, calls attention to problems facing five churches in the vicinity: subway construction has disrupted weekday and Sunday activities. The construction work has turned Sixth Avenue, in front of the Cathedral, into a 35-foot hole. Worshippers have difficulty finding convenient parking spaces on Sundays and many social action and welfare programs of the downtown churches have been affected. The sign highlights the cooperative efforts of the five downtown churches to carry on their usual programs and projects. In addition to the Episcopal Cathedral, other churches affected by the Renaissance II project are St. Mary's at the Point Roman Catholic, First Presbyterian, First Lutheran, and Smithfield Congregational. The Downtown Pastors Association is negotiating with city officials for either free parking or reduced fees on Sundays to help relieve the inconvenience.

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DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

UTAH ENLISTS SUPPORT
FOR PEACE EFFORT

DPS 82045

SALT LAKE CITY (DPS, Feb. 18) -- Beginning last December with a Pilgrimage for Peace, the Episcopal Diocese of Utah has made a concerted effort to enlist lay and clerical support for the House of Bishops call to a weekly prayer and fast day for peace.

On Dec. 21, liturgical celebrations were held at St. Mark's Cathedral here and in parishes throughout the sprawling state-wide diocese. At that time, and continuing on into the new year, parishioners were encouraged to sign and return to Bishop Otis Charles a flyer proclaiming their intention to join the weekly observation.

Conceived by Charles and designed by Carole Carlisle of the Diocesan Peace Center, the pilgrimage focused on "giving and sharing all that is worth saving the world for," as Carlisle described it. The evening included elements of poetry, music and dance and a simple meal to break the fast all had undergone during the day.

At the conclusion, St. Mark's Dean William Maxwell told the congregation of an observation that had struck him with renewed force during the pilgrimage: "Peace is not just the absence of conflict, but the sharing of things that are worthwhile in life. We have known real peace tonight and that has changed all of us for all time."

Carlisle echoed the dean's sentiment. "Peace is just such a hard issue for people to grapple with, because we don't spend enough of our time sharing the good things, making peace real with one another. This facet, creating moments of peace for people to share and understand is one that has not been used fully in the peace movement."

The weeklong observance ended Christmas Eve when communicants of the Cathedral passed in their commitment flyers as part of the Offeratory.

Key element in enlisting broad participation, the flyer is a standard size sheet, folded in thirds as a self-mailer. It contains a quote -- "Apocalypse is the term our tradition assigns to eras of special turbulence and change -- when Christians are given special things to say and things to do" -- and three additional categories of work for which the participant can enlist beyond the fast and prayer commitment.

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DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

CHURCH MANAGEMENT
PROJECT BEING TESTED

DPS 82046

NEW YORK (DPS, Feb. 18) -- An Episcopal Diocesan Asian ministries office and an agency of the General Church Program are collaborating on a seminar project that may dramatically reduce the pain in small church management and bookkeeping.

Chinatown Mission, Inc. of the Diocese of New York and the Community Leadership and Development program of the Episcopal Church Center will field test the concept -- which involves training in small, non-profit business principles and clergy management skills coupled with access to inexpensive and very simple computer usage -- in Foxboro, Mass. in early spring.

The staff officer for community leadership and development, Howard Quander, said his committee would study the results in May with an eye to providing funding for regional meetings on this field.

The three-prong approach was developed by the Rev. Albany S.K. To of the Chinatown Mission. To was trained as a chemical engineer before he entered the priesthood and has earned a master's degree in business administration. The pastoral, educational, training, housing and settlement ministries of the Mission are supported entirely through the work of small non-profit businesses and trades that operate as subsidiaries.

The Foxboro study will provide a full test of the program which is designed around a series of manuals; one spelling out the operative business principles, another to help clergy learn or polish business administration skills. A third set of manuals lays out the programs that To has written for use with the computers.

He maintains that any parish should be able to acquire "micro-computer" hardware sufficient to meet word-processing, double-entry bookkeeping, pledge lists and parish records needs for little more than \$3,000.

Although trained in computer use, he has written the programs -- which are available at nominal cost -- for use by people who have no training in that field. The accompanying manuals were written with a colleague of his who, To claims, hates mechanical things. "She rewrote them through using them, so anyone can sit down at the computer and within a very short time operate these programs."

Information on the Foxboro test and possible future seminar dates will be available after the evaluation.

DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

PICTURE CAPTION

DPS 82047

Conference on Racism (DPS, Feb. 18)

#82047 The Conference on Racism, sponsored by the Coalition for Human Needs early this month in Atlanta, became the occasion for a General Convention strategy session that brought together more than 30 Convention deputies, with bishops and alternate deputies, to explore ways in which the issue of racism can be effectively raised in the Episcopal Church. Speaking to the session, left, is the Rev. Robert Wainwright, a deputy, Executive Council member and chairman of the Coalition for Human Needs Commission. The meeting presented a draft resolution that asks Council and Convention to provide funding and staff support to fight racism. (Photo by Gene Britton).

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